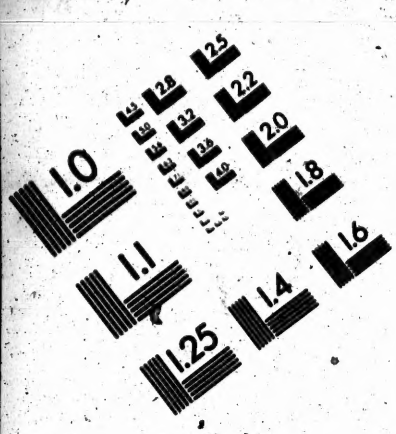

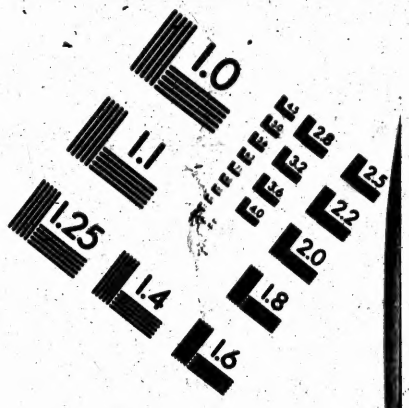

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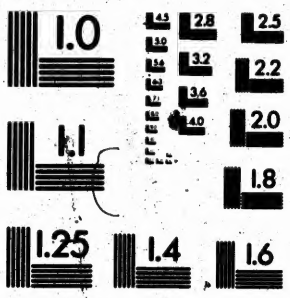

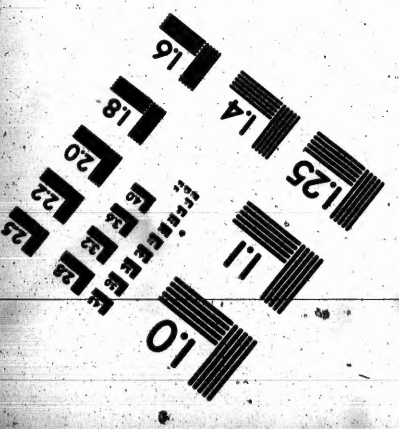

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The Infilling of the . . . . Spirit . . . .

By PASTOR SIRRELL
MIDLAND, ONT.

GOODFELLOW BROS.
1899

. . . SECOND
. . . EDITION

NOTE

The contents of this pamphlet were prepared as an address to be given at the Northern Association of Baptist Churches held at Burk's Falls, June, 1898, and have been put in this form at the request of friends who have already ordered the first edition.

The Infilling of the Spirit.

Perhaps in no age of the world's history since Pentecost have so much attention and investigation been given by the Christian Church to the office and work of the Holy Spirit, as in the present one, and resultant upon this increased study are many strange and even grotesque theories and beliefs. The old idea that the Holy Spirit was a mysterious emanation from God the Father, or an influence, seems to be slowly but surely fading away, and Christians are coming to the truth that He is God indeed, a personality of affections and will, and that He may be grieved, and often is grieved, by those who might have more knowledge, in that He is ignored and forgotten in worship and service.

We are certain that the Holy Spirit was active in the work of creation, was the means of recorded revelation, was deeply concerned in the offering of Jesus Christ for our redemption, and in His resurrection, and is now the power which shall convict the world of sin, effect regeneration, and lead the regenerated one into all truth.

Equally certain are we that there is a

work further even than this which He is willing to do in each anxious and prayerful believer. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit and they shall prophesy." (Joel ii. 28).

The great business which Jesus left with His Apostles to carry the news of a risen Saviour to all men of "every nation under Heaven," was one which required and demanded in them a special ability for its proper conduct and fulfillment, and one for which they felt themselves to be utterly inadequate.

Even the promise "Lo I am with you always," beautiful and inspiring as it is, was not sufficient, except in its fulfillment for this great undertaking, for we see that the only men who knew in its full significance and power, this great truth, were bidden to tarry in the city (Luke xxiv. 49) until they should be prepared by the pouring in and upon them of that increased ability, without which their efforts would be time-wasting and futile.

If these men, without whose message men would die and be lost, must wait for a special power for its declaration—if these men who had been for three years and up-

wards under the tutelage of the greatest and best teacher the world has ever seen, and had heard the words of Him of whom it was said, "Never man spake like this man"—if these men, who had been catching inspiration from daily contact with the Son of God, were not prepared for the proper declaration of the Gospel message, how much more should we, who have not had their privileges, wait for the outpouring and the infilling of God's spirit that we may declare His truth in His way and in His power!

Many persons have supposed that this infilling is attendant upon regeneration and inseparable from it, but we find Scriptures which teach us plainly that the filling of God's spirit which gave power to the Apostles at Pentecost and afterward, followed a considerable time after their regeneration. Did not Jesus say, "Now ye are clean through the word," and yet they must tarry until they had a sure realization of this further experience.

I. *We find that this infilling of God's spirit is a definite experience of which we may speak with certainty.* If the Apostles were not to have a definite knowledge of this new and wonderful power which should come to them, how could they know when the days of their tarrying should cease?

When Paul visited the Christians of Ephesus he asked them, "Did ye receive

the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" and he evidently expected that their answer would be yea or nay (Acts xix. 2), for though Paul was an enthusiast, he was also blest with abundant common sense, and would certainly not expect a definite answer when definite knowledge was impossible.

A further reading shews us that they knew of a certainty that they had *not* received the Holy Spirit, "but when Paul laid his hands on them the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

At the house of Cornelius in Cesarea, Peter was declaring his message, when the Holy Spirit came upon them so manifestly that Peter declared that they "have received the Holy Spirit as well as we." (Acts x. 47.)

These were definite experiences about which there could be no mistake.

II. *This filling of the Spirit of God is always associated with service and testimony*, not necessarily for the working of miracles, for we know that this had been done before the coming of the Spirit. When Jesus appointed and commissioned the seventy He declared, "Behold I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice, [illegible] subject to you, but

rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven." And upon their return they spoke of that which they had done in Jerusalem and said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name." There is a doctrine abroad that this filling of the Spirit necessarily brings about the complete eradication of sin, and is the essential element in complete sanctification, whereas we find that it is always connected with service, and contained the promise of power, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses"; see also Acts iv. 33. How many of God's servants feel the need of power in their work? Why is it that the servants of the Most High God who has promised to "honor those who honor Him," are so utterly helpless and powerless in their effort to reach the great mass of humanity on its weary, sinful march to the grave? This power of the Holy Spirit is not always evidenced in the same way, for "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the work of miracles; to another prophesy; to another discernment of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will."

III. *This work of the Holy Spirit is also distinct and separate from His work in regeneration.* To be regenerated by the Holy Spirit is one thing—to be filled with the Holy Spirit is quite another and higher step in the Christian way.

True, it may be, that some are filled with the Spirit immediately after regeneration, but it is none the less a distinct and separate work. How long after regeneration this infilling of the Spirit may take place we may not know, for there seems to be no Scripture to show us.

The promise of Jesus to His apostles, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence," seems to teach it as a distinct and separate work, for He had already declared them to be regenerated. (John xiii. 10, and John xv. 3).

When Philip began his great work in Samaria great numbers were regenerated and baptized, both of men and women, but we find that there was no filling of the Spirit till a considerable time afterward when Peter and John were sent to them by the Church at Jerusalem to further instruct them in the Christian way (Acts viii. 12-16). These were certainly regenerate men and women, but the record expressly states that "as yet he was fallen upon none of them," showing that the infilling of the Spirit is [illegible] from baptism. We see here [illegible]

we find Peter asking "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" (Acts x. 47).

IV. The position is sometimes taken, that this infilling of the Spirit was to impart miracle-working power, and that it ended with the apostolic times, in support of which it is urged that the manifestation of this power was invariably in the working of miracles, and that in our day we see no miracles.

This is denied by Jesus, who declared that after the impartation of this new power the Apostles were to be qualified as "witnesses," and by the statement of Paul (1 Cor. xii. 4-10) that miracle working was but one manifestation of the power which should come upon them.

We have also a statement from Peter which should forever set at rest the idea that the "promise of the Father" was limited to any generation, for he expressly declared that not only themselves and their immediate descendants, but also those far distant should realize this new and mighty factor in the Gospel service. "For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call." God's promise is all-embracing, not limited to any race, climate, or generation.

V. The *necessity* of our being filled by the Holy Spirit is shown in the fact that these men who were to conquer the world for Christ had to wait for it, at Jesus' express command.

He himself entered not on His ministry until at His baptism the Spirit came upon Him and the attestation of God the Father was given.

When sorely tried of Satan in his physical weakness we find that He was "full of the Spirit." At the beginning of His ministry we find Him rejoicing in His mission, and He declared then "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me."

Brethren of the Northern Association, would we feel the power of God in us? Then let us submit ourselves, and turn emptied, to Him, for this infilling and enduement, that we may be worthy to be a voice for Jesus. If we thus turn and ask in faith believing, we shall receive, for "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Let no one suppose for an instant that, because we need this great blessing preeminently above all other blessings, there is any occasion to underrate or belittle other preparation for the declaration of God's truth.

The greatest men of God in the world have been educated, equipped men, inspired with a love for souls, who have laid all [illegible] at the feet of [illegible] will.

Now and then we do meet someone who has been carried away by the great thoughts of my subject, and has gone into the extreme that no preparation is necessary for the preaching of God's Gospel other than this.

"We are reminded that the prophets did not go to college—Jonah is sometimes put forward as an instance of a remarkable and rapid training—and the suggestion is, that any tincture of learning will be simply a rebate from fervor; which is doing something less than justice to the culture of Joel, the oratory of Isaiah, the pathetic art of Jeremiah, or the inspired logic of Paul." The Apostles are used as an argument against a trained ministry, and uneducated men are held up as models for preachers, when Jesus Himself did not think these chosen men fit for His work until they had been three years under His constant care. Can not anyone see that John was a man of solitary genius for whom there need be no rules? Can anyone state in terms of university curriculum the value of those three years with Jesus?

And now and then someone will make the hackneyed contrast between learned men without grace, and unlearned men with grace, as if learning and grace were necessarily opposites. One of the greatest [illegible] of modern times, upon [illegible]

Holy Spirit has not [illegible]

youth, and longed to see a more thoroughly and more generally equipped ministry. Was not the greatest of all the apostles a man of learning and profound ability?

VI. The possibility of obtaining this great gift for ourselves is seen in the words of Jesus when He said, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that *ask* Him?" (Luke xi. 13).

In answer to the prayer of Peter and John a great manifestation of God's power and the gift of the Holy Spirit are seen in Acts iv. 31, and also it is worthy of note that this was *after* Pentecost.

A like case is seen in Samaria, when, in answer to the prayer of Peter and John, they who had already believed and been baptized "received the Holy Spirit." Let us then, prostrating ourselves, emptied, hungering and thirsting, and in believing prayer, call on Him who has promised it, for this great, this needed, this absolutely essential infilling of His Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples that they should not only do as great works as He did, but that they should do greater works, "because," said He, "I go to my Father" (Jno. xiv. 12). The Holy Spirit who came at His leaving, is the power for "the greater works."

Would we do the greater works? Then must we be filled by the spirit of God.